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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terry Goddard Warns Hotel Guests About Potential Identity Theft

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Aug. 22, 2007) Attorney General Terry Goddard today warned guests of a local Best Western Hotel that they could be victims of identity theft.

The general manager of the Best Western Hotel & Suites Phoenix Northern, located at 1615 E. Northern Avenue, sent a letter to about 164 customers informing them that five months ago an on-site storage area containing personal guest information was broken into and information dated between 2002 and 2006 was stolen.

The notification was prompted by this week's sentencing hearing of a defendant who was twice arrested in the past year with records stolen from this hotel.

Jaime Jimenez Hernandez, 31, of Tolleson, was sentenced to three-and-a-half years in prison after pleading guilty to fraud charges. This sentence will begin after he serves two-and-a-half years for an unrelated weapons charge. Three other individuals are also involved in this case:

- Delina Marie Mejia, 29, of Avondale, pleaded guilty to fraud and will be sentenced Sept. 27.
- Denise Ortega, 33, and Sarah Lee Golladay Tercero, 40, both of Tolleson, are pending trial in October on similar charges.

According to court documents, Hernandez was arrested for using credit card information to purchase goods and services. The credit card numbers were part of the information stolen from the Best Western Hotel.

Goddard suggested that consumers who may be affected by this security breach consider ordering a credit report to check for any suspicious activity. Arizona consumers can get a free annual credit report from all three credit reporting agencies under a Federal Trade Commission rule. Arizona consumers may want to order the three reports over a period of several months so they can better follow their credit records.

Please visit the Identity Theft Page on the Arizona Attorney General's Office Web site at www.azag.gov for more information about how to obtain your free credit report or visit www.annualcreditreport.com.

Assistant Attorney General Todd Lawson is prosecuting these cases.

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